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## My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.  
—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

THE subjoined letter from Mr. Van Marcke, concerning the disputed "Halsted" picture, will be read with mingled surprise and interest:

[Original.]

29 RUE DU GÉNÉRAL FOY, PARIS, 27 Juin, 1887.

MONSIEUR LE DIRECTEUR:

Je viens aujourd'hui que je suis fixé vous donner un renseignement sur la question du petit tableau dont M. Child m'a soumis la photographie en me demandant s'il était bien de moi, parcequ'il en existait un second semblable; ce à quoi j'ai répondu que j'en doutais, ne me souvenant plus à ce moment qu'effectivement je l'avais reproduit il y a quatorze ans, environ.

M. Knoedler, soucieux de sa réputation d'honorabilité justement méritée, m'apporte lui même le second tableau en question que sa maison avait vendu, et que je certifie parfaitement authentique, quoique modifié dans certains détails. Du reste, ayant appris depuis la visite de M. Child que les deux tableaux provenaient de la maison Goupil et C<sup>ie</sup>, je ne conservais plus aucun doute sur leur authenticité à tous deux.

J'espère, Monsieur, que ma lettre mettra fin à cette longue polémique soulevée par un manque de mémoire de ma part; car il n'a jamais été dans mes habitudes de reproduire deux fois le même tableau.

Je compte, Monsieur, sur votre impartialité pour donner à ma lettre la même publicité qu'à celle de M. Child.

Veuillez, je vous prie, Monsieur, agréer l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

EM. VAN MARCKE DE LUMMEN.

[Translation.]

MR. EDITOR: I am prepared to-day to give you information concerning the little picture of which Mr. Child submitted to me a photograph, asking me if it was really by me, inasmuch as there was a second one like it; to which I replied that I doubted it, not remembering at the moment that I had really reproduced it about fourteen years ago.

Mr. Knoedler, solicitous of his justly-merited reputation for fair dealing, himself brings me the second picture in question, which his house had sold, and which I certify to be perfectly authentic, although modified in certain details. Moreover, having learned since the visit of Mr. Child that both pictures came from the house of Goupil & Co., I no longer entertain any doubt of the authenticity of them both.

I hope, sir, that my letter will put an end to this long discussion, raised by a lack of memory on my part; for it has never been my habit to reproduce twice the same picture.

I count, sir, on your impartiality to give to my letter the same publicity as to that of Mr. Child.

Pray accept, I beg of you, sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

EM. VAN MARCKE DE LUMMEN.

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IN thus acknowledging the disputed picture as his own work, Mr. Van Marcke makes the best amends in his power to Messrs. Knoedler & Co. for the unpleasant imputation which he unwittingly threw upon them by his strong statement to my Paris correspondent that he had "*no recollection of having copied*" the Briggs picture, and that he "*makes a point of never painting two pictures alike.*" Much might be said of the unique position in which Mr. Van Marcke places himself, as an artist of reputation, in admitting making a palpable imitation of one of his own little studies, which is barely a foot long; but the facts are now all before the public, who can think out the mystery for themselves, and I forbear from further comment. In simple justice to the dealers involved, however, I give this startling acknowledgment the same publicity that I gave, in the interest of picture purchasers, to the artist's previous statement; and, for my own part, cheerfully pronounce them fully exonerated from any imputations of wrong-doing that may have arisen from Mr. Van Marcke's unfortunate "lack of memory."

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THIS whole matter furnishes the strongest argument in favor of verifying the supposed works of artists of note while they are still alive. The circumstances in the case of the Halsted picture were such that nothing but the painter's personal decision could establish satisfactorily its authenticity. The temptation to fraud in paintings is steadily increasing with the growing demand for them, and it is a grave question whether it would not be well for American picture-owners to form an association for the express purpose of verifying the contents of their picture-galleries, as far as possible, while the artists are yet living. The result of my efforts for two months past toward making a list of the authentic Van Marckes in this country satisfies me that a concerted effort on the part of those interested is essential to secure the desired object. Only the simplest form of organization, and the

appointment of an executive committee, would be necessary. Accurate photographs of the pictures, indorsed with such written details as could be furnished regarding them, should be collected and officially submitted by the committee to the artists, who would add a further indorsement of genuineness, except in doubtful cases, which could then receive as much investigation as the importance of the pictures and the disposition of their owners might justify. The cost of obtaining such guarantees of authenticity would be but slight, if the work were systematically undertaken, and would be a myriad-fold repaid in the increased value of a collection thus certified, to say nothing of the satisfaction to the owner in knowing that his pictures were genuine.

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THE time is ripe, too, it seems to me, for another important step. Something analogous to the trade-marks of the commercial world is imperatively needed in the world of art. Every painter should be legally authorized to select and register an individual mark, to be applied in some fashion, as nearly indelible as possible, to all his works, and an official photographic and descriptive record, accessible to the public, should be kept of every work thus stamped. A system like this, coupled with heavy penalties for the forgery or "colorable imitation" of these marks, would be of immense value to artists, and especially to picture-owners, whose investments in paint and canvas, in this country alone, already amount to many millions, and are constantly increasing.

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THE legislative talent that has done so much for the copyright protection of authors, and the trade-mark protection of manufacturers, should be invoked without delay to exert itself in behalf of picture-makers and picture collectors. The French Government, in particular, should take immediate steps in this direction, as the works of French artists are at present the most widely scattered and the most liable to fraudulent imitation. Our own national Legislature, however, need not wait for a Gallic precedent, and I suggest that some enlightened Congressman may do himself and the public a genuine service by introducing, early in the next session, a "Bill to Establish a Bureau for the Stamping and Registration of Works of Art."

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THERE has been recently an exposé by The Chicago Inter-Ocean concerning a replica of Munkacsy's "Last Hours of a Condemned Man," that Mr. Haseltine has been offering in that city for \$35,000, which will hardly benefit that enterprising dealer, or the artist who painted it, although I presume that nothing known of the business methods of either of these gentlemen should occasion particular wonder in the matter. The original of this picture is owned by Mrs. Wilstach, of Philadelphia, who expressed to the representative of The Inter-Ocean complete surprise at the announcement of the existence of a replica of her painting, which was bought of the artist by her late husband, at a high price for that time; for in those days Munkacsy was in bitter poverty, and declared that Mr. Wilstach was his benefactor, to whom he owed a debt of eternal gratitude. The announcement of a replica of this important picture following so closely on that London replica of his "Christ before Pilate" suggests the inquiry of how many more replicas Mr. Munkacsy may have made of his paintings in which Americans have so largely invested? There is a business phase of this rapidly-growing replica business which cannot fail to touch the hearts of our millionaire picture-buyers, for it assuredly touches their pockets.

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THE cheap and crude chromo-lithograph of commerce, some ten years ago, gave to color-printing in the United States a serious set-back in public estimation from which it has not even yet recovered, although in certain branches of the art we are certainly unrivalled by any other country. But the chromo-lithograph has got a bad name with us, and it has to be called an "oleograph" or a "photochrome" or a "chromograph" before it can be expected to receive respectful consideration. The Art Amateur has endeavored to show, and, perhaps, not unsuccessfully, what can be done in reproducing artistically the brush-work of some of our American painters, for the benefit of country art students who cannot hope to own, or, in general, even to see the originals, and Messrs. Prang & Co. maintain their high reputation for reproducing artistically studies of flowers and landscape; but there is nothing of the kind done on this side of the Atlantic which will compare in edu-

cational importance with the famous publications of the Arundel Society, of London, which, I am glad to notice, have at last found some one enterprising enough to establish an agency for their sale in this country.

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"FOR nearly forty years this society"—I quote from a recent article in The Nineteenth Century—"has had for its object to make generally known the purest and worthiest remains of the arts of former times, more especially the works of the most eminent early painters—Italian, Flemish and German—and the most remarkable monuments of Italian sculpture, both of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The chief aim of the society, however, has been to obtain and reproduce in a popular form correct drawings of those frescoes which are little known, and in danger of ruin either from neglect or mis-called 'restoration.' It has during that period been doing this work quietly and unostentatiously, but if any one wishes to form some idea of what that work has been, and the wide area over which it has been extended, let him pay a visit to the society's rooms and see its collection of water-color copies from Italian fresco-paintings, illustrating the principal periods of the art, chronologically arranged on the walls, and ready for publication whenever opportunity and means allow." Some of the earlier color prints of the society are extremely rare, and are not to be seen in this country, but the New Yorker can get an excellent idea of the work of the society by calling at the rooms of Messrs. E. & J. B. Young & Co., the American agents, in the Cooper Union, where there is an excellent exhibition of the Arundel publications. I have before me the two latest plates, each admirable in its way, and worthy of wall space in the home of any artistic person. One consists of allegorical figures after the fresco by Paolo Veronese, in the Villa Masèr, near Venice, and the other is the well-known portrait of Dante, from the fresco by Luca Signorelli, in the Duomo, at Orvieto. It should be said that these admirable reproductions, although issued by an English society, are executed in Germany. No such color-printing is done in England.

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THERE are portraits of Americans by American artists which stand a good chance of outliving in public interest some noted ones by such foreign painters as Bonnat, Herkomer and even Munkacsy. Mr. Chase's "Ready for the Ride," owned by the Union League Club, for instance, might prove to be a very respectable "old master," and there are portraits by Sargent, Duveneck, Eastman Johnson, Alden Weir, Wyatt Eaton, Carroll Beckwith, and J. W. Alexander, which, one would think, an intelligent posterity could hardly fail to regard with respect. The reputation of the Boston painter, Mr. Porter, will surely live in this country in such charming portraits as those of Miss Maude Howe, Mrs. Sarah Belmont, Miss Beckwith, Mrs. Schlessinger, Lady Mandeville, and Mrs. Charles Franklin—a veritable gallery of American beauties of the day. Mr. Porter's charming portrait of little William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., painted with a noble-looking hound, brought him the largest price he ever received. His price for a full-length portrait has gone up considerably from the \$2000 he asked a few years ago. For the picture just named he got more than twice that sum. A large part of the amount, perhaps, was paid in consideration of the dog. Dogs are difficult animals to represent satisfactorily, and "come high"—which observation calls to mind an early experience of a young amateur artist of my acquaintance.

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THIS young man, one fine day, found himself stranded high and dry out in Kansas. It was a sunny morning, and he was sitting on the piazza meditatively looking out into the straggling high street of the town and wondering how he would ever manage to pay his bill, when he espied, among a group of citizens conversing, a picturesquely attired ranchman. Whipping out a lead pencil, he made a hasty sketch of him on the back of an envelope. One of the party noticed the proceeding and told the unconscious sitter that his "fortergraph was being took." The ranchman walked up to the artist, examined the sketch and was delighted. "Say, young feller, I'll give yer four bits (fifty cents) for that," he said. The offer was promptly accepted, and then each one of the little group of citizens clamored for similar honors at the same price. All that afternoon my young friend was kept busy with his pencil making profile sketches of new-comers. His reputation grew so that next morning, before he had finished his breakfast,

half a dozen new sitters were already waiting for their turns to be "took." Business was brisk all that day.

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TOWARD dusk, a strapping-looking fellow, with long hair, bearded like a pard, with a slouched sombrero pulled over his brow, and a pair of Colt's navy revolvers ostentatiously displayed in his belt, strode up to the hotel piazza where my friend was at work. He was accompanied by a big, savage-looking dog, which unceremoniously poked its nose into the artist's lap.

"Say, boss, I want to be took with the dawg," said the ruffian; "what's the charge?"

"I don't care about drawing dogs," replied the artist, who had never drawn a dog in his life, and was afraid to try; "but I'll take you for fifty cents."

"Give yer a dollar to take me and the dawg," persisted the man.

"No, I don't want to draw the dog."

"Give yer two dollars."

"No."

"Give yer four."

"No—I'd rather not."

"Must have the dawg took! 'Give yer a fiver.'"

"No, really I—"

"Come, now, boss, no fooling! We've both got to be took, and that's all there is about it. See here! I'll give yer ten dollars for a fust-class picter of me and the dawg, and I don't want no more chin about it. Come, hurry up, boss, we're ready."

With that he gave the beast a kick or two to get it into the right pose, and stood off about a hundred yards, ready for business. There was evidently nothing to be done but consent. After a full hour's struggle, the ruffian was "took"—and so was the "dawg." Such a looking animal was never seen before or ever will be again. With a puzzled expression the man looked at the drawing critically for a minute or two. My friend held his breath, and his eyes were fixed nervously on the formidable looking weapons reposing in the fellow's belt. But the crisis passed. Without a word, favorable or otherwise, the ten dollars were handed to my friend, the man and the beast sheered off, and the transaction was complete. There was a deep sigh of relief. As I remarked before, "dogs are difficult, and come high."

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I UNDERSTAND that Munkacsy's portrait of the beautiful wife of a famous New York editor, for which the latter paid an enormous price, having quite failed to do justice to the lady's charms, has been retired to the attic region of the family mansion.

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HAVING, last month, in good faith, praised the catalogue of the Pène Du Bois sale, I find it my duty now to denounce it as wilfully misleading the public. Only a small proportion of the books, and very few of the prints, belonged to Mr. Du Bois, who tells me, by the way, that he is not responsible for the Sotheran catalogue, which was made during his absence abroad. His friends will be glad to learn this, particularly in view of the addendum of books of a class quite foreign to his acknowledged tastes as a bibliophile. It would seem that Messrs. Leavitt, the auctioneers, are to blame not alone for this phase of the sale; the management of the whole affair was a disgrace to their house. Not only was the sale "stuffed" by various dealers, who sought to profit at the expense of the public by associating their unsalable wares with the name of an esteemed collector; but the public, after all, was not even allowed to buy the books, for most of them were "bid in" by their owners. Chancing to call in at a well-known book-shop a day or two after the sale, I found on the counter a score or more of the most valuable bindings which figured in the catalogue, and investigation proved that other dealers who assisted in the "stuffing" had their representatives at the sale to "bid in" their books when in danger of being sold below the limit.

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A POLITE note has been received from the Bureau of Education at Washington, asking that The Art Amateur be sent to it "without charge," adding that "such a favor would be highly appreciated." I should like to do the Administration a favor, but, before committing myself in the matter, would like to know what first-class foreign mission is vacant just now. While awaiting the reply of the Secretary of State, I would remark that the Government can have The Art Amateur on the same terms as any ordinary citizen, viz., \$4 a year, payable in advance. MONTEZUMA.

## THE FIFTH AVENUE.

### I.

OF the thousands of streets by which Manhattan Island is intersected, not excepting Wall Street and Broadway, the Fifth Avenue is the most famous. Yet a few years ago it was but a middling sort of street, not fit to be spoken of in comparison with any fine street of any European capital. Since then, we have changed all that; there is now much on the avenue to amuse, and a little to delight, the critical eye, though a great deal of it is still commonplace, and respectable only in the sense which makes the word stand for all that is stupid and philistinistic. The brown-stone front of twenty years ago still shows itself along many a weary block on the avenue; hotels, shops and apartment houses have added to its garishness, but not to its attractiveness; the churches, with two or three exceptions, remain exteriorly the same, examples of bad Gothic or worse classic architecture; but enough fine modern houses have been added to give the street a new appearance as a whole, while of the older dwellings that preserved something of the colonial spirit, enough remains to give it a slight flavor of antiquity, and to contrast agreeably with the more ornate and more varied architecture of the present time. The Fifth Avenue is, even now, not a handsome thoroughfare; perhaps it will never be such; but it can boast of a plenty of fine buildings, and of at least an equal number that are proper subjects of discussion.

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THE root, so to speak, and starting-point of Fifth Avenue is Washington Square. Glozing sentimentalists, like the late Richard Grant White, and certain novelists, like Henry James, have endeavored to make an artistic reputation for it; but a dull place it must have been in its palmiest days, and a dull place it still would be were it not for the stream of traffic that now passes through it from Sixth Avenue to South Fifth Avenue and Broadway. The drays, the cabs, the Fifth Avenue stages, the fountain in the centre with its flowers and its circle of loungers from the French quarter hard by, might furnish many a motive for a painter of street scenes; but the architecture of the square would enter for very little into his pictures. The dreary Gothic pile of the University, with its absurd great central window and poky corner turrets; the gloomier and uglier Asbury Methodist Episcopal church, with its wretched brown-stone crockets and pinnacles, chipping and scaling away from the dingy granite of its walls and buttresses; the two big apartment houses, the Benedick and the Washington, the former spoiled by its cast-iron bays, the latter not redeemed by its abundance of fair reliefs in terra-cotta; the few old-time houses, now turned to base uses on the south side, and the long row of them on the north with Doric or Ionic pillars to their doorways, do not constitute an artistically imposing public place, nor is the view from it up the avenue such as would make a strong impression on a stranger to the city. To the New Yorker, though, who knows all about what lies beyond and on either side, there is something in the umbrageous roof of foliage, which extends nearly to Fourteenth Street, and in the modest but substantial houses that form a base for the column of the avenue, that irresistibly appeal to him. He cannot persuade himself that it is all no better than many a street view in provincial towns and cities. Yet the finer of the two houses that are plainly perceptible, ex-Mayor Cooper's, on the right-hand side, has nothing to distinguish it from its neighbors but the fact that it is a corner house, with two pairs of Ionic pillars instead of one, and two business-like bay windows. And, if trees make a street, there is scarce a village in the Union that cannot show a more beautiful one. But the New Yorker, even if oblivious of the Revolutionary and literary associations of the ground he stands on, thinks of the millions that line the way all along to Fifty-ninth Street and beyond, and of the numerous houses in which some of these millions are apparent to the eye. The little beauty that there is in this first view of the avenue, represents to him the presence and the possibility of a great deal more.

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LEAVING the Quaker-like and quasi-classic square, the first indication of the new order of things on the avenue is at No. 3, a handsome, elaborately ornamented house in brick, brown-stone and terra-cotta, with low, square stoop and artistically decorated bay window, and two long spirals of wrought iron, looking almost as light as the curls that were worn by the young women of the

avenue when the house was built, disposed like a trophy over the doorway. Almost directly opposite is John Taylor Johnston's white marble house, No. 8, which is an excellent example of what the quieter, if not more refined, taste of the last generation aimed at. Architects admire the purity of the classic mouldings that frame in its door and windows. It has lately been redecorated in the interior, so as to be fit for a self-indulgent Gothamite to live in; but, in comparison with neighboring dwellings, it is still simple and not over luxurious. The Tudoresque No. 10, facing it, has been improved, with less regard for unity of style, by the addition of an Italian-looking stoop and some irregularly placed windows. Nos. 24 and 32 are fair specimens of old-time magnificence, staid and perfectly symmetrical, adorned with sham-classic porticos and cornices. A little farther on, we meet with a row of battlemented brown-stone fronts with Gothic porticos of the Strawberry Hill variety; and now we have seen within three blocks of Washington Square every type of the old Fifth Avenue house, and one good example of the modern. It must be admitted that the latter is more likely to please all sorts of people than even the best of the older houses. And it is plain, too, that the majority of these are bad enough to account in part for the distinguished bad taste, in matters architectural, of Poe and Willis and other writers of their period. The two churches that stand upon the corners of Tenth and Eleventh streets are of the meanest type of Gothic, that which, surviving the Georgian era, knew not yet Pugin nor Ruskin, nor Viollet-le-Duc. The grass-plot in front of the First Presbyterian church contains, however, a fine hawthorn tree, which, when covered with blossoms, it is interposed between one and the angle made by the church and rectory, gives the place a little of the picturesque appearance of an English village graveyard. That hawthorn is, on the whole, the most ornamental feature of lower Fifth Avenue, where, perhaps, the trees are older and more handsome than in any other street in the city.

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THE several club-houses located between Fourteenth and Twenty-third streets are not worthy of an epithet of any kind. The Romanesque Chickering Hall, and a new business-house on the south-west corner of Nineteenth Street, present handsome and dignified exteriors. But it is not until we come north of Madison Square that we enter on that portion of the avenue which is, at the present time, the most characteristic. Here shops and hotels, clubs and churches, palaces and boarding-houses, saddlers, tailors, candlestick-makers, swells, sharpers, and Episcopalian clergymen, all having some ostensible connection with London, England—not with London, Ontario—do their best to make the street look like several small sections of Oxford Street, Bond Street, and Piccadilly rolled into one. Quite unsuccessfully; the travesty is hardly even recognizable as such; the sunshine is too bright, the colors are too gaudy, the shams too open and transparent. But the show is all the more amusing because actors and mise-en-scène are so loud and so garish, so new, fresh, green, raw, and untuned.

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THERE is, at first sight, one exception, the church on the corner of Thirty-seventh Street, which might be taken for a London parish church such as Inigo Jones built and Hogarth drew, and in which, according to Ruskin, Turner, when a boy, became imbued with a melancholy atheism. It looks a temple to the goddess Dulness. From the apex of the many-sided pyramid that serves for a steeple to the bases of the immeasurably tall piers that support its central pediment, there is not a sound member in it, but all are ill-designed or out of place. But even this has not escaped Americanizing. It seems that the trustees or the congregation did not like to be disposed toward a melancholy atheistic frame of mind by the aspect of their place of worship; for, a year ago or so, they turned over the decoration of the interior to Mr. Lafarge, and that gentleman's assistants have so joyously, and with such good heart, filled the windows with cut-paper patterns in opalescent glass and covered the ceiling with similar work in green and gold, that there is little danger now of any worshipper meriting the punishment assigned by Dante to those who lack the Christian virtue of cheerfulness. The heaviness of the exterior itself is broken up and dispelled by the harlequin windows; so that the avenue loses the effect of the only building on it which might really remind a cockney of his native parish. GOTHAM,